CHAPTER 3

ALTERING THE LENGTH OF PATTERNS

Lengthening or Shortening a Waist Pattern—Lengthening and Shortening Sleeve Patterns
Increasing or Decreasing the Size of Collars—Lengthening and Shortening Skirt Patterns

BUTTERMILL PATTERNS are made with such expert skill and are the result of such scientific accuracy and study that they are an absolutely perfect fit for the woman of average proportions. But it often happens that a woman varies from the normal at some point. The variation may not be marked enough to be noticeable. But if she is an inch or two long or short waisted, if she is slightly round-shouldered, if the upper part of her arm is long in proportion to the lower part, her patterns will have to be altered a trifle to make them correspond to her figure. The alterations are extremely easy to make, but this point again illustrates the advantage of making your clothes to suit your figure, to fit the irregularities of the figure that are taken care of in this chapter.

The changes that are given here may be made without altering the original lines of the pattern, though they should be made in the pattern and not in the garment after it is cut out. If you attempt to make these changes in fitting the garment it will mean more work than if you had made a simple alteration in the pattern before cutting out your material. Trying to alter the garment itself is unsatisfactory, even with the additional work, for these changes can not be made after the garment is cut.

Almost every woman knows if there is any variation from normal in her figure. She knows if she is tall or short, long-waisted or short-waisted, if she has round shoulders, a narrow back, a flat chest or a broad back, etc. Before cutting your material you must be sure that the pattern is the right length and shape for your particular figure.

ADAPTING PATTERNS TO LONG OR SHORT WAISTED FIGURES—Before cutting your material have your figure measured from the collar seam at the back of the neck to the normal waistline, and close up under the arms to the waistline. Make a memorandum of these measurements as they are taken.

Now take your lining pattern and take the corresponding measurements of the pattern. Remember that the back pattern has a 3/8 of an inch seam allowance at the neck and that there is a 3/8 of an inch seam allowance at the armhole edge under the arm.

Compare your measurements with the measurements of the pattern. In most cases it is sufficient to alter the waist length at the lower part. Some figures, however, are long-waisted from under the arm to the waistline and short from under the arm to the neck. If this is your case you will discover it in comparing your measurements with the measurements of the pattern. If the lower part is too long lay a plait across each piece about 2 1/2 inches above the waistline, (III. 27.) The
depth of the plait will depend on the amount of difference between your figure and the length of the pattern.

If you find that your underarm measure and that of the pattern are the same, but that you are shorter-waisted than the pattern, the difference is in the upper part. Decrease the length of the upper part of the pattern by laying a plait across the front and back, half-way between the under arm and the neck. (Ill. 27.)

If you are long-waisted instead of short-waisted the lining pattern can be altered at the same points, by cutting the pieces of the pattern and separating them sufficiently to give you the length you need. (Ill. 28.)

In laying plaits across the pattern the edge of the pattern should be evened off after the plaits are laid.

If an alteration is made in the length of the lining a corresponding alteration must be made in the pattern of the outside of the waist or dress, taking out or putting in the same amount and in the same places.

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**TWO-SEAM SLEEVE PATTERNS**—Your arm may measure exactly the same as the sleeve pattern, but its length might be made up of a long upper arm and of a short forearm. In that case the elbow of the pattern would not come in the right place on your arm. Or your arm may be perfectly proportioned, but it may be longer or shorter than the average, in which case an alteration would have to be made in both the upper and lower part of the sleeve pattern to make it the right length for you.

For a two-seam sleeve pattern measure along the inside of your arm from the armhole to the bend of the elbow, and from the bend of the elbow to the wrist. You will need both these measurements, so as to be sure that the sleeve elbow will come in the right place. Measure your sleeve pattern along the inside seam of the upper part from 3/8 of an inch below the armhole edge to the small double perforations which indicate the elbow. Measure from the elbow perforations to within 3/8 of an inch of the wrist edge. The 3/8 of an inch on each edge is the seam finish.

Compare your arm measurements with the measurements of the pattern. If the pattern is too long for you above the elbow lay a plait across the pattern a little above the elbow. (Ill. 29.) If there is an inch difference in length the plait should be 1/2 of an inch deep. If the lower part of the sleeve is too long for you lay a plait across the lower part below the elbow. (Ill. 29.)

The same alterations should be made in the under part of the sleeve pattern, making the plaits the same depth that you made in the upper part of the pattern.

When the plaits are laid the edge of the pattern will become uneven. If the arm is very full the space between the elbow and the greater width of the upper part of the sleeve should be filled out, giving you an even line. If the arm is not large you can trim off the extra width and get your even outline in that way.
If the sleeve pattern requires lengthening make the alteration at the same places in the pattern, cutting across the pattern and separating the pieces as in Illustration 30. Correct the outline of the edge in the same way as when the sleeve is shortened.

**LENGTHENING OR SHORTENING A ONE-SEAM SLEEVE PATTERN OR A KIMONO SLEEVE PATTERN**—One-seam sleeves and kimono sleeves fit the figure quite differently from the two-seam sleeve and so have to be measured in a different way. In using either of these sleeves have your arm measure taken from the center of your back along the outside of your arm to the wrist with the arm bent. (Ill. 31.)

In the case of a one-seam sleeve pin the sleeve pattern to the back pattern with the armhole edges lapping \( \frac{3}{4} \) of an inch. If there is a cuff pin it to the lower part of the sleeve lapping them \( \frac{3}{4} \) of an inch. Turn up the cuff in case the cuff is double. (Ill. 32.) Compare your measurements with the measurements of the pattern, and if the pattern is long or short for you, alter it as shown in Illustrations 33 and 34. A sleeve of this kind has no elbow curve, so that it is not necessary to alter it above and below the elbow. It is simply a question of adding or subtracting length at the correct point. If the pattern is an inch too long for you lay a \( \frac{3}{4} \)-inch plait across the pattern. (Ill. 33.) If it is too short slash the pattern and separate the pieces. (Ill. 34.) If your arm is full you can correct the outline by filling in below the plaits and above the slash. If it is of average size you can trim down above the plait and below the slash.
In the kimono sleeve pattern measure from the center of the back below the neck to within \( \frac{3}{8} \) of an inch of the lower edge of the sleeve. (Ill. 35.) This \( \frac{3}{8} \) of an inch is a seam finish. The alterations for lengthening or shortening a kimono sleeve are exactly the same as for the one-seam sleeve. (Ills. 33 and 34.)

**INCREASING OR DECREASING THE SIZE OF THE NECKBAND AND COLLAR**—If the neckband of a pattern is not the right size for your neck it should be altered at the center back. If it is too small cut it through the center and separate the pieces sufficiently to make it the right size for you. Illustration 36 shows this alteration for neckband and a turndown collar.

If the collar pattern is too large for you lay a plait across the center back. (Ill. 37.)

**LENGTHENING AND SHORTENING GORED SKIRTS**—Have your measure taken from the normal waistline at the center-front to the distance from the floor at which you wear your skirts. This length varies with different fashions. Add an inch to your measurement for the give and take of making the skirt. The front-length measurement of your skirt pattern will be given on the pattern envelope. Compare your measure with the length of the pattern. If the pattern is too long for you, lay a plait straight across each gore about six inches below the hipline. (Ill. 38.) The hipline is seven inches below the normal waistline. (Ill. 38.)

If the gores are cut with one straight edge, measure the plait at the straight edge. If both edges of the gore are bias, measure the plait at the line of large double perforations that mark the straight thread of the material.

If the figure is full, the edge of the gore on the bias side should be filled out from the folded plait to the
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If the figure is slight, this extension which comes from the plait can be trimmed off.

To lengthen a gored skirt pattern, cut across each gore six inches below the hipline and separate the pieces as much as necessary. (Ill. 39.)

In very rare cases it is sometimes necessary to alter the length of a skirt pattern as much as four or five inches. In an extreme case of this kind it is better to make half the alteration six inches below the hip as shown in the Illustrations 38 and 39, and the other half at the lower edge of the pattern, turning up the lower edge to shorten it and adding to it to lengthen it.

In a circular skirt the pattern should be altered at the lower edge.

LENGTHENING OR SHORTENING A STRAIGHT SKIRT PATTERN—The length of a straight skirt can be altered at the bottom, turning up the lower edge if it is too long and adding more length in cutting if it is short.

DRAPED SKIRT PATTERNS, TUNIC SKIRT PATTERNS, ETC.—If it is necessary to alter the length of a draped skirt pattern or a tunic skirt pattern, or a pattern with tucks or marks for trimmings, alter it according to the instructions given on the pattern envelope. The position for the alteration will vary with the skirt.